

Summer Work and Travel (SWT) Program in Serbia – Frequently Asked Questions

- Who can participate in the SWT program?

Applicants must be bona fide students enrolled and participating full time at an accredited post-secondary academic institution. We accept applicants who are on "budget", self-financing students, as well as students of vocational and three year higher education schools. We also accept students who have repeated a year in the past, as long as they are not repeating their current year. Apsolvents are not eligible for the program.

- What are SWT Program dates?

The start date of the Program is May 21st and the end day is October 1st. All Serbian students are expected to return to Serbia by October 1st. Students who seek to extend their status in the United States will likely have a harder time qualifying for a visa in the future.

- Can third country nationals apply for a J-1 visa at Embassy Belgrade and participate in the SWT program?

Students who are third country nationals who have student status in Serbia are welcome to apply. Similarly, students who are Serbian nationals who study outside of Serbia are also welcome to apply at our Embassy.

- Are Ph.D. students eligible to participate?

Yes, we accept applicants who are Ph.D. students.

- Can first year students participate in the program?

Yes, they are eligible to apply. Each visa applicant is unique; however, we do look for at least one semester of exams passed in order for first year students to be good candidates for the program.

- Are final year students eligible for the program?

Yes, as long as they are regular students, making good progress and they are not in apsolvent status.

- Is there an age limit for visa applicants? In other words, can older students participate?

There is no age limit, as long as the student is making good progress in school. We have had successful applicants in the past who worked for a decade or more only to decide to become students again.

- When scheduling appointments, is there a limit as to how many applicants can come from one SWT agency?

No such restrictions exist and we do our best to accommodate all applicants during the SWT visa interviewing window, which starts on March 1st and ends in mid June.

- What jobs are not permitted under the SWT program regulations?

The following jobs are not permitted under the SWT program:

1. Jobs in the adult entertainment industry;
2. Positions that are substantially commission based and thus do not guarantee minimum wage
3. Sales positions that require participants to purchase inventory that they must sell in order to support themselves;
4. Domestic help positions in private home, such as child care, elder care, gardener, chauffeur, etc.
5. Pedicab or rolling chair drivers and operators;
6. Operators of vehicles or vessels that carry passengers for hire and/or for which commercial drivers licenses are required;
7. Jobs in factories;
8. Jobs with moving companies;
9. Jobs at mall kiosks and carts; or
10. Any position that could bring notoriety or disrepute to the Exchange Visitor Program

- Do you accept only students who apply through the SWT agencies?

Students are welcome to apply on their own and applying on their own will not diminish their chances to qualify for a visa. However, this means that they have to find appropriate employment in the United States and arrange their travels and accommodation all on their own.

- Can students who have previously been refused a visa apply again?

Yes. However, as with all applicants who have previously been refused, they need to demonstrate to the consular officer that their situation has significantly changed since the previous refusal in order to qualify for a visa. A good example of a successful application would be a student who was repeating a year when he was in his second year, but is currently in his fourth year and is able to demonstrate that he is making good progress and that the repeated year was an exception, not a rule.

- How much does having good grades matter in qualifying for the program?

While there is no official cut-off for what constitutes good grades for the purposes of qualifying for a visa, we do take into account an applicant's success as a student. Those who have success in their studies are usually successful visa applicants.

- How much in advance do the supporting documents need to be sent to the Embassy and which documents are required?

Supporting documents must be sent to the Embassy one week prior to the scheduled visa interview, regardless of whether a student is applying through an agency or on their own. Please see our web site to find information on how you can mail documents to us using the DHL courier service.

The following documents need to be sent in: a valid passport, correctly completed DS-2019 form, a student "Index", transcript from the university where the applicant is attending and a certificate about her student status, issued by the university. All documents must be in their original form and will be returned to the applicant at the completion of the interview. For applicants who are granted a visa, their DS-2019 will be returned to them alongside their passport, once the visa is printed. Also, students must take the mini-quiz about the William Wilberforce Act that was provided to them by the agencies and give them to the interviewing officer at the time of the interview.

- What if the applicant makes a mistake on their DS-160?

We ask all visa applicants to complete their DS-160 form honestly and to the best of their knowledge. If the DS-160 form is completed with mistakes or if an applicant fails to disclose key information on the form, such as whether they have an immediate relative in the United States, their visa application might get rejected.

- What is the purpose of the little quiz that students need to complete before the interview?

The quiz talks about an important law that protects SWT program participants while they are in the United States. The William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (WWTVPA) of 2008, or the Wilberforce Act for short, was created in order to protect certain types of visitors to the United States from trafficking in persons and other crimes. Thanks to this law, SWT program participants are guaranteed certain rights, such as having equal employment rights as U.S. citizens, having the right to report any criminal behavior to the authorities, such as the police, having the right to decline giving their passport to anyone, including the employer, etc. Most importantly, Serbian students should know that if they become victims of crime while in the United States, they are not alone and there are laws that can offer protection.

- What is the visa interview like and what is expected from students?

The visa interview takes place in English. Based on visa U.S. regulations, visa applicants who wish to participate in this program must have at least a basic level of English language. The interview is a series of questions posed by the interviewing officer. The applicants are expected to respond to all questions as truthfully and as accurately as possible. At the end of the interview, the interviewing officer will inform the applicant whether the visa is approved or refused. If a visa is refused, the applicant will be given a letter explaining the section of the immigration law under which the visa was refused.

- What are the consequences for an applicant who is not truthful on their DS-160 form, and/or during their interview? Also, what are the consequences for someone who is falsely presenting themselves to be a full-time student, making good progress?

At U.S. Embassy Belgrade, we take fraud very seriously. We review each visa application and all supporting documents in great detail and we discover numerous fraudulent visa applicants every year. Consequences can range from being refused a visa to being found permanently ineligible to receive any type of U.S. visa in the future. You could also be expelled from your university or even prosecuted.

- If the visa is approved, how long does it take for the passport to be ready for pick-up at a selected DHL location?

On average, it takes us about two to three working days to process a visa application. For any passport delivery questions, please visit our [web site](#).